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THE ANTI-UNION.

PR CE 2D.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1799.

No. XXV.

" You may please to remember that in the old law they were forbid " to see the a kid in his mother's milk;" of which the received interpretation is, that we should not use that to the destruction of any creature, which was intended for its preservation."

WALLER'S Speech on the Imp. of Just. Crawley.

GENTLEMEN,

THE following historical memoir, relating to the revolution of Switzerland, forms a curious contrast to that of Mallet du Pan on the same subject. I have taken the trouble of translating it from the French, and if you see in it a parallel to any other country, or think it may be useful or amusing to the public, you are heartily welcome to the fruit of my labour.

AN ANTI-JACOBIN.

THE Republic of Switzerland had long preserved the federal Union which connected its cantons, and from some recent extension of constitutional privilege, its commerce, manufactures, and civilization, had experienced an unexampled increase. The generous policy of a powerful neighbour, pleased at the advances of this inferior state, determined to promote its prosperity, and encourage its growth. Influenced by the kindest and most disinterested intentions, the great nation had used every endeavour to acquire a paramount ascendancy in the counsels of Switzerland, and at length obtained the entire direction of her affairs. The happy effects of this benign and salutary influence would have been apparent to every eye, had not the malignity of these natives, whom France in her wisdom excluded from power, misrepresented her designs, and calumniated her character. These men actively and insidiously perverted all her motives: Her kindness they called oppression, her generosity selfishness, and her magnanimity ambition. That wholesome restraint which for a considerable time she deemed it necessary, as well for the morality as the happiness of Switzerland, to impose on its commerce and its laws, was preposterously misinterpreted into the jealousy of a domineering spirit; and it was even said that the voluntary and gratuitous bounties of the great nation were the reluctant concessions of rights which she would otherwise have been compelled to acknowledge. It may easily be imagined that the clamour of these demagogues had much effect upon the unenlightened minds of the natives, and frequently obstructed the plans which France had formed for the improvement of Switzerland. Indirect interference became at length insufficient for the benevolent purposes of the mighty republic, and she re-

solved by an effort of kindness, hitherto almost unknown to nations, to fold the infant state in her embrace and cherish it into maturity, to participate with it her nourishment and communicate to it a portion of her strength. This disinterested kindness was received with rapture and gratitude by every virtuous inhabitant of Switzerland, and undismayed by the corrupt violence of those who opposed the measure, the high-minded patriots laboured with enthusiasm to procure the extinguishment of their country in an incorporated Union with France. A rancorous conspiracy existed in one canton, which threatened destruction to the federated state—animosities proceeding from religious distinctions alienated the minds of one sect from another—the lower classes of society sunk in poverty, which their peculiar situation precluded them from even the hope of surmounting, were naturally indolent; and their passions and understandings, untamed and untouched by the arts of civilized life, had often been successfully worked on by the designs of unprincipled politicians. The cause and the means of redressing all these grievances could not long remain concealed from the true friends of Switzerland, and they did not hesitate to impute the former to the existence of a federal, and seek for the latter in an incorporated Union with France. History will record as one of the anomalies in the character of man, that a blind attachment to antiquated forms, and the other delusions which deceive weak minds, induced many of the natives, in whose hearts prejudice had usurped the place of patriotism, to imagine that all these evils were either inseparably connected with human nature and human constitutions, or were the proper objects of municipal law. Some there were who in their folly even deplored the humbled pride of their country, and in the frenzy of their indignation, frequently repeated the empty and childish expressions of national freedom, national independence, as if so poor and contemptible a state could pretend to a distinct and independent existence, or that it must not receive infinitely greater honor by subservience to that people whose fame is unbounded, and whose commerce extends to the extremities of the earth, than from the ludicrous boast of its constitutional liberty.

The vigilant and active benevolence of France, had placed in the public offices of Switzerland, certain clerks, who to unpolluted integrity added profound erudition and every excellence of literary talent. This class of men, to whom venality or profligacy of principle could not be imputed, who never sold their services to the highest bidder, or employed their pure pens in the drudgery of corrupt masters;—these immaculate citizens of the world, who nobly preferred the interest of a foreign country to the illiberal advantage of their own, were indefatigable

in illuminating the public mind. Regardless of the military force which France had provided to secure the happiness of Switzerland, this race of intellectual beings employed the gentler but not less effectual weapons of solid sense, refined argument, and all the fascinations with which wit, fancy, and imagination make reason irresistible;—their efforts were aided by the generous exertions of the French ministry, who even condescended to deliver harangues in the Council of Five Hundred, for the single purpose of printing and distributing them in immense numbers at the national expence, to reclaim the barbarism and enlighten the darkness of the Swiss. These admirable productions in demonstrating the benefits which Switzerland must derive from the incorporation, in wealth, constitution, and manners, united all the embellishments of persuasive eloquence with the precision of mathematic certainty.

The commerce of the Switzers, which formerly was fettered with such restraints as commerce cannot endure, had recently obtained a freedom of intercourse with the rest of the world almost unlimitted, and which in the course of time, from the natural advantages of the country, might lead to national wealth. The flocks of that pastoral people produced abundance of wool, and their fields favourable alike to pasture, and the cultivation of flax supplied the necessities of other countries, and even of France with provisions and linen, which many of the peasantry had acquired expertness in manufacturing. But France, from that scrupulous care of inferior states, which always distinguished her counsels, for a long time declined not only to permit the importation of the Swiss woollen manufacture into her market, but also prohibited the exportation of the raw material from Switzerland to other countries. This restriction, with the many others imposed by France, on the commerce and industry of Switzerland, was founded on the eternal principles of immutable justice. It could not escape the foresight of France how ill mankind can bear sudden prosperity, how apt the acquisition of wealth or power is to intoxicate and derange the human understanding, and how rapidly the influx of riches would change the simple and innocent character of the contented Swiss peasant, into that compound of meanness and vice, the citizen of a wealthy and commercial nation. So far, therefore, as depended on France, the doctrines of the sage Rousseau were strictly observed, and the virtuous pleasures of a state of nature were not exchanged by Switzerland for the depravities of civilization.

But the humane efforts of France were vain, the trade of Switzerland became free, and a traffick with other countries, which unluckily was too successful, debauched the national morality, and wealth and all its consequent train of evils were making a fatal progress among this unfortunately prosperous people. France saw with sorrow that the deadly career of cultivation could not be checked, and that since she could not restore Switzerland to its former state of innocence, it was her duty to regulate the commerce of that country so as best to secure

the happiness of its inhabitants. Since pastoral felicity was no longer to be their lot, the great nation took care that they should not feel the anxieties which attend the progress from poverty to riches, or sustain the struggles by which that end is generally accomplished. With this view France proposed incorporation, that the existence of the two nations might be identified, that her treasure might circulate through every limb of the consolidated republic, to make her interest the interest of Switzerland, her prosperity its prosperity, her power its aggrandizement. With what an impenetrable veil does commerce shroud the minds of its votaries! Can it be believed that even this prodigal generosity of France found opponents among the traders of Switzerland? Active and indefatigable to invent some plausible ground of resistance, they at last stood on that article of the treaty of incorporation, which subjected Switzerland to an equal share in the future general taxation. Their narrow minds were incapable of conceiving the motive of France in introducing this stipulation, they could not see that the contributions of Switzerland were beneath the attention of the mighty republic, and that the pitiful revenue of so poor country was required only to make the treaty appear reciprocal, and as nominal *quid pro quo*, to give stability to the bargain. The other objections which issued from this restless body of men were no less frivolous: "We surrender the free constitution of our country," said they, "and what have we to gain?—our local situation cannot be changed—you cannot give our country population, or our people industry—we cannot expect from your merchants or manufacturers a liberal conduct, because they have always discouraged our advancement—are we to look for a sudden and magical change from illiberal jealousy to an open participation of mercantile advantage?" And even if you were sincere, the relative condition of the two countries makes such a change impossible:—Indolence and poverty cannot contend with enterprize and wealth, and without a capital the Swiss adventurer must be extinguished even in his own market." How obvious and satisfactory was the answer! "When the interests of the two countries come to be identified, their commercial gains shall no longer be distinct, it will be like a poor trader uniting himself to a wealthy ferme, and although no individual Swiss may attain riches from the measure, yet the nation, as being part of the great republic, will become enriched, and laws cannot descend to notice the advantage of individuals. But added to this, the direct import trade of the towns most remote from France will increase exceedingly, while these nearest to her will supply by canals the whole nation with articles of foreign commerce, which may be so easily conveyed from France, and thus the import trade being more than trebled the prosperity of the people (which has no dependence on its export trade) will be advanced in an incalculable degree.* Add

* Mr. Sampson has in his pamphlet applied a similar train of close and conclusive reasoning to this country—page 40.

to these advantages, that not only will the produce and manufactures of France be facilitated in their importation and sale in your market, but no sooner shall Switzerland be raised to a level with the great nation, than the French merchant shall abandon his counting-house and his connexions, the French manufacturer transport his machinery, the French farmer desert his land, all of them cast aside their national prejudices and carry with them their capital, and people the towns and fertilize the plains of happy Switzerland. Then shall the dreams of poets be realized in that terrestrial paradise, all its mountains shall be mountains of gold, all its vallies vallies of diamonds, and Switzerland alone shall boast the possession of seas of milk and ships of amber." This demonstrative reasoning convinced multitudes: A few whom nothing could satisfy remained in darkness: "Oh!" said they, "you held out similar hopes to Holland, and no sooner had she embraced you as a sincere friend than she found you faithless; if you violated the treaty of incorporation with the Dutch how can we commit all our concerns to your honour?" Insensibles! not to perceive that the true security of political contracts is the mutual advantage to be derived from them, that the validity of such a convention always implies that no superior benefit can be derived from its violation, and that the generosity of France (in the gratification of which she feels more delight than riches can bestow) on the one hand, and the true interest of Switzerland on the other, are the real guarantees of such a treaty. Did it follow as a fair argumentative consequence, that because France found it expedient to amend some of the articles in the Dutch treaty, she could by possibility find it necessary to adopt the same conduct towards Switzerland?

In that country the advocates had always been common subjects for the contempt and ridicule of the people, on account of their ignorance, and sordid, ungentlemanlike manners. It was a ludicrous and proverbial remark among men of education that the advocates were "*doctorum hominum indistinctum genus.*" The members of this base body, attached only to their own narrow interests, resisted the welfare of their country, under the flimsy pretence of a regard to ancient forms, and from them proceeded most of the objections both as to the legality and the policy of the incorporated Union. These bigots had the audacious folly to declare that a legislative assembly, deputed for the purpose of enacting laws, had no power to destroy the franchise of the body by which they were delegated, and by preventing the existence of future distinct legislative bodies, subvert the constitution of which they were appointed the guardians. This absurd doctrine was countenanced by the obsolete books of their law, but received an immediate answer from the voice of reason;—the very nature of a representative legislature demonstrated the omnipotence of the delegated body, for in the very act of electing the representative the constituent plainly and unequivocally surrenders his rights and his understanding, and the rights of his posterity to the discretion of the person

he has chosen; and although the senator may forget that some duties are owing to the mass from which he came, yet these are entirely voluntary; and his power, to which the constitution assigns no definite limit, is therefore unlimited, and extends to the privilege of uprooting the constitution itself. But on this topic the argument of a Dutch representative, whose generosity was equalled by his inflexible integrity, was most convincing. How ridiculous, said he, for so contemptible and weather-beaten a state as Switzerland to reject what Holland, proud, opulent, disinterested and formidable Holland willingly accepted! This was unanswerable. The arguments on the policy of the measure were no less cogent; and next to the 40,000 standing arguments, were most impressive on the minds of the enlightened Swiss. Is it not a melancholy reflection, said the French writers, that your legislature has long been made the theatre of French faction, and is it not your reproach to have been called, in the tempest of your contests, a puddle in a storm? Will you continue to be torn by these tumults which disgrace, although they characterize all free states? Will you preserve so turbulent an existence? No; rather seek repose in the slumber of death than hold so fretful and feverish a being. This flashed conviction—it was irresistible. It was also with admirable candour and address represented to the religious sect which wanted nothing but a participation of political power, that when the system from which they were excluded should be destroyed, they might obtain those benefits which, during its continuance, it was impossible they could acquire; while to the favored sect the threat was more than insinuated, that if the old system were suffered to remain, the *impossibility* must inevitably happen, and their ascendancy be prostrated by an universal and equal communication of constitutional privilege. For a long time, however, the understandings of many of the natives remained unconvinced, and the warriors of the great nation enforced the arguments of her politicians. The shades of error fade before the light of reason—France succeeded—Switzerland surrendered her separate existence, and became happy. The change which this glorious event produced in the minds and conditions of men was astonishing. Political and moral doctrines which had long been buried under the oppression of a fanatic religion and illiberal laws revived, and triumphed in the forum of enlightened debate. The adventurous reasoner, untrammeled by superstition, pushed his speculations to the extent of his principles. When men had the fortitude to sacrifice their parent country, and bury her in the bosom of a superior power, the chain with which vulgar morality had bound their conduct was broken, and there was scarcely any act which they formerly held to be criminal that could not, in their new tenets, receive full justification. From what illiberal ignorance, called indifference to the country which gave them birth, the transition was easy to the same want of feeling towards the natural parent, and the restraints which the old morality imposed on

their consciences were entirely removed; filial piety, and all lesser duties, were abolished, and what the Swiss lost in constitutional freedom, was amply compensated to them in the unbounded exercise of intellectual liberty—the benefits which, in other respects, they have obtained are innumerable. No political faction disturbs their tranquillity; on the contrary, the exactness and order with which the new mode of administering the constitution is conducted, resembles the quiet and regularity of military discipline. The multitude of French troops which swarm in their towns and villages, have added much to the population of that district; and by increasing the consumption of every article of produce and merchandize, they have literally contributed to encourage agriculture, and extend commerce. The wealth of that limb of the consolidated republic is besides infinitely augmented, as well by the export of all the materials necessary for manufacture, as by the import of those luxuries which France sends to the Fiscal, military and municipal officers whom she has stationed there. The treasures of the great nation, lavished in the expences of those whom she appoints to guard the interest of the Swiss, freely circulate through every class of men in that happy country. The manners and morals of the natives have also received wonderful improvement, the former from that refinement and elegance which intercourse with an army never fails to give, the latter from the vigilant superintendance of the soldiery. Thus, time which has verified the predictions of the politicians of France, has refuted the malignant forebodings of her enemies, and all the blessings of liberty, equality, and French fraternity, are plentifully poured upon that fortunate portion of Europe which was formerly Switzerland.—Live the Republic!

The following letters were found after a dinner of the Whig Club, near the head of the table, and J. S. Esq. was in the chair, it is therefore presumed they dropped out of his pocket.

SIR,

I HAVE it in command to desire that you will forthwith procure to the enclosed resolutions the signature of all and singular the gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders, of the county of Antrim, and that you will spare neither

exertion, influence, threat, promise, or menaces, in enforcing a proper list of names, as it is of the utmost consequence; and transmit the same forthwith to my office at the Hoziers-hall, or after the hours of business at my apartment in the Lower Castle Yard.

I am

Your most obedient, &c.
ROGER GOWER, Clerk of Hoziers.
To the Sheriff of Antrim.

N. B. Take care you are not counteracted by the M— of H—t—d, and if force is necessary G— N—t is on the spot.

SIR,

I have the honor of your letter, and have the pleasure to transmit you back the resolution signed by 36 gentlemen and freeholders, most of my own relations, and I am promised more signatures, but you know a promise in political business cannot always be depended upon. I did not think it prudent to call the county: I judge this the best and most constitutional mode of collecting the public opinion; besides there are near 6000 freeholders, and if there was a meeting many might be talking of independence, liberty, free trade, and such nonsense.

I remain Sir,

Your most devoted humble Servant,
Sheriff of Antrim.
To Roger Gower, clerk of the Hoziers, at his office at Hoziers-hall, or after the hour of business at his apartment in the lower Castle Yard; or in his absence—to J. St—p—s, Esq. Member of the Whig Club.

QUERE—Why is not the word Union in the Antrim address? Answer—Because it was manufactured by the same workman who composed the tract, that kept 220 gentlemen up two whole nights debating on its meaning.

We have received an account of the Toasts drank at the dinner of the glorious 104, who dined at the Siruglers in Cook-street, Sir B. R. in the chair, which shall appear in our next.